



Boundary representations are not necessarily authoritative.

BACKGROUND

Land and Climate. Yugoslavia covers 39,435 square miles (102,136 square kilometers)—about the same area as Kentucky. Serbia accounts for 34,136 square miles; Montenegro, 5,299. Several major rivers flow through this region, including the Danube, Sava, Tisa, Morava, and Drina. Vojvodina (in the north) is part of the Danubian plain and contains fertile agricultural land. The North Albanian Alps (*Prokletije*) and Šar Mountains are in the southwest, and the Balkan Mountains are in the east. Montenegro (literally “black mountain”) is mostly mountainous and consists of the Zeta Valley, Dinaric Alps, and Skadarsko Lake (shared with Albania). Montenegro also has a coastline on the Adriatic Sea that includes the picturesque Bay of Kotor and Saint Stefan Island.

The climate is central continental, with Montenegro experiencing more severe weather and colder temperatures than Serbia. Serbian winters are cold, averaging 32°F (0°C) in January; summers are warm, averaging 75°F (23°C) in July. Central Serbia is susceptible to strong winds (*košava*) that pick up speed on the plain of Vojvodina. Belgrade is the federal capital as well as Serbia’s capital. Podgorica (Titograd until 1992) is Montenegro’s capital.

History. Slavic peoples settled on the Balkan Peninsula in the seventh century and for several generations were organized by clans rather than in a united state. In the 11th century, Serbs united and consolidated territory that eventually became the empire of Tzar Dušan. Montenegro was incorporated in the 12th century. In 1346, Tzar Dušan’s rule included Albania, Epirus, and northern Greece. Serbian power began to decline with the Battle of Kosovo (1389), when Serbs were defeated

by the Turks. For the next five hundred years, Serbs were ruled by the Turkish Ottoman Empire and still consider the era one of bondage. Montenegro remained independent.

Serbia rebelled under the leadership of Karageorge (1804) and Obrenovic (1815), both of whom formed ruling dynasties. Serbia achieved full independence in 1878. Other Balkan Slavs had been subjugated to both the Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Empires, and Serbia determined to rid the Balkans of these forces. In the first Balkan War (1912), it defeated Turkey with the help of neighboring nations. The second Balkan War (1913) brought victory over a former ally, Bulgaria. In 1914, a Bosnian Serb assassinated Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand in the effort to liberate Serbs in Bosnia. Austria declared war, regional alliances formed, and the conflict quickly became World War I. The Austro-Hungarian Empire lost the war and was broken into several new states. At that time, Serbia led the move to unite Slavs under one government, becoming the principal power in the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918. The name was changed to the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929.

When Germany invaded Yugoslavia in 1941, Croatian leaders sided with the Fascists against Serbia. At the same time, a bloody civil war was being waged in Yugoslavia between communists and monarchists. Fighting on both fronts, many Serbs lost their lives in battle and at the hands of fellow Slavs. Thousands of civilian Jews, Gypsies, and Serbs were killed in Croatian concentration camps, a fact not easily forgotten by Serbs who later (1990) came under Croatian domination.

The civil war ended when World War II did, and the

Yugoslavia

Communist partisan fighters emerged victorious. They formed, under the leadership of Josip Broz Tito, a federal socialist state. Its politics were more liberal and economics more progressive than other socialist countries.

Tito died in 1980 and the federation weakened. Ethnic tensions and a deepening economic crisis led Croatia and Slovenia to demand secession in 1990. Slovenia's independence proceeded smoothly, but Croatia's was resisted by resident Serbs who wanted to remain united with Serbia. A war ensued (1991) in which the Yugoslav army helped Croatia's Serbs gain control of Croatia's Krajina region (which Croatia regained in 1995). Serbia also supported Serbs in Bosnia-Herzegovina in their war against Muslims and Croats but eventually urged Bosnian Serbs to cooperate with international peace efforts. The 1995 Dayton Peace Accord formally ended the war.

Before 1990, Serbia was a republic that incorporated two autonomous provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Since the breakup of the former Yugoslavia, those regions have been reincorporated into Serbia (as they were before 1974). In 1992, Serbia and Montenegro declared themselves the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

After completing his second and final term as president of Serbia, Slobodan Milosevic won parliamentary support from Serbia and Montenegro to serve as the president of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Massive protests erupted against Milosevic in November 1996 after his party, the Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), failed to recognize local election results. The SPS reinstated election results three months later, but divisions between opposition groups stalled further change.

In October 1997, Milo Djukanovic, a challenger to Milosevic, won presidential elections in Montenegro against Milosevic's protégé and incumbent, Momir Bulatovic. In spite of opposition from Montenegro, Milosevic appointed Bulatovic as Prime Minister of Yugoslavia in May 1998.

Tensions between ethnic Albanians and Serbs in the province of Kosovo erupted into fighting following a crackdown of Serbian security forces in March 1998 against the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), an ethnic Albanian insurgency group favoring Kosovo's independence. By September 1998, Serbs had forced several hundred thousand Albanians to flee the area, which, though 90 percent Albanian, Serbs regard as the cradle of their culture. Renewed sanctions, ongoing negotiations, and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) threats failed to deter Yugoslav forces. In March 1999, NATO began intensive air strikes on targets throughout Yugoslavia, especially Belgrade and Kosovo. Meanwhile, Serb forces systematically destroyed Albanian property and also used torture, rape, and mass executions to "cleanse" the province of Albanians. Nearly a million refugees fled to Albania, Macedonia, and other states for safety, straining those states and the international community's ability to cope with the numbers. After 78 days of air strikes, Milosevic agreed to withdraw his forces. An estimated ten thousand Kosovar Albanians were killed in the Serbian campaign; more than three thousand Albanians, Serbs, and Roma are missing. A large multinational peacekeeping force has been deployed to protect civilians and establish order as the refugees are repatriated. Serbian and Gypsy residents of Kosovo are now targets of retaliation. Although Milosevic still retains power in

Serbia, billions of dollars in war damages and a ruined economy have caused widespread discontent with his regime.

THE PEOPLE

Population. Serbia's population of 10.5 million people is currently not growing. Montenegro's population of 680,000 is not growing. Most Serbians are urban dwellers, while Montenegrins tend to be more rural. Similarities between the two groups are great and differences are found mostly in historical experience. Prior to the end of World War II, Montenegrins were counted as Serbs in the census.

Most people in Serbia are ethnic Serbs (66 percent). Ethnic Albanians (17 percent) dominate Kosovo but only settled the region in large numbers in the past 50 years. Hungarians (4 percent) are concentrated in Vojvodina. Serbia is also home to smaller numbers of Romanians, Croats, Ruthenians, Turks, and Slovaks. In Montenegro, most people (62 percent) are ethnic Montenegrin, but there are also Slavic Muslims (12.5 percent), Serbs (9.2 percent), Albanians (6.2 percent), and Croats (1 percent).

Language. The principal language is Serbian, a Slavic tongue virtually identical to Croatian. In fact, before 1990, the language of Yugoslavia was Serbo-Croatian. Serbian can be written in both Cyrillic and Latin scripts. Cyrillic is the official script, but schoolchildren are required to learn both. In 1974, Albanians and Hungarians won the right to use their language in local government, media, and education.

Religion. Serbs and Montenegrins are Serbian Orthodox Christians. The Serbian Orthodox Church was formed in 1221 by St. Sava and is similar to the Greek and Russian Orthodox Churches in practice and doctrine. It has strong ties to these churches but distinguishes itself from them in some respects. For example, it teaches that each family is protected by a specific patron saint. On each saint's day, relevant families prepare large amounts of food for anyone who enters their homes. Hosts serve these guests a spoonful of *zito*, a mush made of wheat, sugar, and nuts.

The Serbian church follows the Julian calendar, which is 13 days behind the Gregorian calendar. Patriarch Pavle is the current head of the church.

Religion was neglected during the communist period, but activity has surged since 1990, as evidenced by growing numbers of baptisms and religious wedding ceremonies. Religious freedom allows for the current proliferation of Muslim mosques and Catholic churches. Other Christian denominations are small, as is the Jewish community.

General Attitudes. Serbs consider themselves principally to be a heroic and proud people. Likewise, Montenegrins value their heroic traits above all else. Based on a history of resisting Turks, Austrians, and Germans, Serbs view themselves as liberators. Both Serbs and Montenegrins are warrior peoples who honor the memory of military conquests. The Battle of Kosovo has been ingrained in the national consciousness as the time that the Christian Serbs tragically but heroically chose death at the hands of Muslim Turks rather than surrender.

Serbs are openly emotional and are not a very private people. They share their lives with extended family, neighbors, and friends. They tend to be pessimistic and sometimes fatalistic about events that surround them. They value family, country, and honesty. Serbs also have a sense of humor

that allows them to laugh at their own faults.

Montenegrins, while sharing many Serbian traits, tend to be more traditional and patriarchal. Men still dominate society and women are considered subordinates.

Personal Appearance. People are concerned with their public appearance and take care to look well dressed and groomed. Most wear Western clothing styles, except in a few rural areas where older people wear *nošnje*. This traditional attire varies by region but tends to include long skirts and cotton shirts for women; men wear wide pants, vests over shirts, and *opanke* (leather shoes with upturned toes). Older urban men wear hats. Women often dye their hair (gray hair is seldom seen); red and auburn shades are popular among younger women. Western-style running shoes and jeans are popular throughout the country.

CUSTOMS AND COURTESIES

Greetings. When people are introduced, they shake hands and say their last name, followed by *Drago mi je* (I am pleased). If people already know each other, they shake hands or kiss (often three times on alternating cheeks) and say *Zdravo* (Hello) or *Dobar dan* (Good day). In greeting an older person, a younger one must rise. Men always rise when greeting women.

Adults are addressed by professional (i.e., Dr., Professor) or conventional titles and their last names. *Gospodin* (Mr.), *Gospodja* (Mrs.), and *Komšija* (neighbor) have reemerged to replace “comrade” as conventional titles. *Tetka* (auntie) and *Čika* (uncle) are reserved for older people who are not family but for whom “Mr.” and “Mrs.” are too formal. People never refer to others, except close friends and family, by their first names. Likewise, they use *vi* (“you” formal) to address others, especially initially. Moving from *vi* to *ti* (“you” informal) must be initiated by the older person, or if two people are the same age, by the female, but this practice is changing with the younger generation.

Gestures. Serbs do not use hand gestures much when speaking. It is impolite to stretch, yawn, or crack one’s knuckles in public. It is also impolite to point with the index finger. Smoking in public used to be rude, but it is increasingly common in both urban and rural areas. Eye contact is valued and is expected when people are raising glasses in a toast prior to drinking.

Visiting. People spend a lot of time visiting and entertaining. Sitting for hours over cigarettes and a cup of coffee or some *rakija* (alcoholic drink usually made from plums) is common. The length of visits reflects a leisurely pace of life. Most visiting is on an informal, unannounced basis; people simply drop in. Sometimes people prearrange socializing but usually not far in advance. Guests often bring gifts such as flowers, coffee, wine, or a box of chocolates; if one is visiting for the first time, a gift is nearly obligatory. Flowers are given in odd numbers, as even numbers are reserved for funerals. Guests bring relatively expensive gifts when visiting on special occasions, particularly for weddings.

Eating. Since the workday usually begins at 6 or 7 a.m., people wait until 10 a.m. for their breakfast (*doručak*), which can be a substantial meal. The main meal of the day is *ručak*, eaten after work around 4 p.m. This is a heavy meal that includes soup and a meat dish. Dinner is a light snack.

Guests invited to dinner are served *meze* (an antipasto of

cheese, sausages, etc.) before the meal. When entertaining, hosts offer more food than can be eaten; this is a sign of hospitality and wealth. Indeed, hosts consistently urge guests to eat more during the meal and guests customarily decline several times before accepting. The host or hostess often places more food on the guests’ plates despite protests. As times change, people are declining only once or twice before accepting; further protests are taken seriously by a growing number of hosts. Guests are expected to finish all food on their plates. Meals are times for family conversation and social interaction.

LIFESTYLE

Family. The family is highly valued; nearly everyone expects to marry and have children. Divorce and remarriage are common. Rural families tend to have more children than urban ones. The father is the head and backbone of the family; in rural areas, male children are valued more highly than females. Rural households include three generations. Upon marriage, a couple moves in with the groom’s parents. Due to a housing shortage, urban couples might also live with parents for a while, but this is seen more as an economic necessity than a desirable tradition. Throughout the country, both husband and wife usually work outside the home. Children are cared for primarily by grandparents or other relatives, and less commonly in child-care facilities.

Dating and Marriage. When dating, young people tend to go out with one steady partner. They go for walks, to cafés and parties, and to each other’s homes. Civil wedding ceremonies are most common, but religious ones are on the rise. Rural weddings are more elaborate than urban ones; they include several days of drinking, dancing, and eating that often force the family into debt. The groom’s family usually pays most wedding expenses, except in less traditional urban areas where costs are more evenly split. Rural brides often have a dowry (home furnishings or cash), and they usually are given a piece of jewelry by the groom’s family. Among Albanians, the groom’s family pays a bride-price to the woman’s family and the bride has no dowry.

Diet. The cuisine is influenced by Turkish, Austrian, Hungarian, and Greek cultures. The most common foods include *pasulj* (beans), *sarma* (cabbage leaves stuffed with minced meat and rice), *roštilj* (grilled meats), *čevapčići* (small, elongated minced meatballs eaten with chopped onions), and *punjene paprike* (stuffed peppers). Roasted pork or lamb, served with potatoes, is favored on special occasions. Montenegrins are known for their smoked meats. Coastal Montenegrins eat more seafood.

Typical cheeses include *kajmak* (consisting of the accumulated skim of boiled milk) and *sjenički sir* (a soft and fatty cheese often crumbled on *sopska*, a Greek-like salad). Locally grown produce includes cabbage, lettuce, tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, apples, pears, watermelons, strawberries, plums, and raspberries. Bread (usually white) is eaten with each meal and wine is served at the main meal. People also drink coffee and juices; they drink tea more during illness.

Recreation. Visiting and talking is the favorite leisure activity, but people also enjoy watching television. In small towns, residents walk the main streets in the evening. Music is popular throughout the country, but folk music (*narodna muzika*) is especially favored in rural areas. People perform folk dances such as the *kolo*, consisting of small movements by dancers

Yugoslavia

sometimes linked in a long line or circle. The *gusle*, a small traditional stringed instrument, is played in rural areas. Urban cultural events are relatively inexpensive and well attended.

Soccer is the most popular sport, followed by basketball, volleyball, swimming, and skiing. Sports are stressed in school, so young people tend to be more enthusiastic about them. Some people enjoy boating on lakes and rivers.

Holidays. Yugoslavians celebrate Orthodox Christmas (7 Jan.) and New Year's Day (14 Jan.). The International New Year (1 Jan.) is celebrated also. Women's Day (8 Mar.) honors women in the home and at work. Easter is in the spring. Workers' Day (1 May) is a major holiday for all. *Vidovdan* (28 June) commemorates the Battle of Kosovo. Four times throughout the year, Orthodox Serbs mark *Zadushnice* (a day to honor the dead). One such day is in early November soon after Catholics and Protestants have their day (1 Nov.) to visit the graves of family and friends.

Commerce. Public offices are open from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. Private businesses and kiosks tend to have longer, more flexible hours. Food shops and large department stores remain open until 8 p.m. Some urban *dragstors* (drugstores) that sell basic foods are open 24 hours. Outdoor food markets open around 6 a.m. and close in the afternoon so the vendors can return to their villages.

SOCIETY

Government. The federal assembly consists of a Chamber of Republics and a Chamber of Citizens. The former has 40 seats split equally between Serbs and Montenegrins. The Chamber of Citizens has 138 members. The SPS is Serbia's dominant party. In opposition stand the Serbian Radical Party and the Democratic Renewal Party, among others. Milo Djukanovic's For a Better Life coalition dominates in Montenegro. The voting age is 18.

Economy. The economy is in shambles; few accurate statistics are available. Long-lasting problems stem from 1990 when the government first began dismantling its market socialism system. Significant funds were spent in supplying ethnic Serbs in warring areas and in housing refugees from both Bosnia and Croatia. International sanctions blocked external trade and froze foreign assets until 1996, which suffocated the economy and precipitated hyperinflation.

Although UN sanctions were lifted in 1996, the economy did not grow as hoped. The average per capita income has been estimated at roughly \$1,500, but most people earn closer to \$150. One-third of the population lives in poverty. Unemployment is about 50 percent. Inflation was brought under control in 1994 with the introduction of the new *dinar* (YD) currency but remains high (about 85 percent in 1996). International sanctions banning foreign investment and freezing state assets abroad were imposed again in 1998 due to escalating violence in Kosovo. Slow reform, lack of privatization, an expanding trade gap, and a "brain drain" of skilled labor—as well as extensive damages to infrastructure from air strikes—are hindering progress. Also, some international reconstruction aid for Kosovo has not been delivered as promised.

Serbia produces fruit, vegetables, wheat, corn, oats, and

DEVELOPMENT DATA

Human Dev. Index* rank	NA
Adjusted for women	NA
Real GDP per capita	NA
Adult literacy rate	NA
Infant mortality rate	14 per 1,000 births
Life expectancy	73 (Serbia); 76 (Montenegro)

livestock. Agriculture may constitute 70 percent of gross domestic product in 1999. Natural resources include lead, zinc, copper, and lignite. Manufacturing plants are located in Serbia, while Montenegro has aluminum and steel factories. Montenegro also has tourism, shipping, and agricultural potential.

Transportation and Communication. A well-developed public transportation system serves most of the population. Air travel connects major cities, as does rail and bus service. Rural areas are reached by bus and private vehicle. Most roads are paved. Most newspapers and magazines receive some government support and are under pressure to accept certain controls. The state controls television and radio stations but some private stations also broadcast. Some urban residents have access to satellite television.

Education. Free schooling begins at age seven with eight mandatory years at the basic (*osnovna*) level. Optional middle school (*srednja* or *škola*) includes grades nine through twelve. Graduates can then go to a two-year technical college, called *viša škola* (higher school), or to a university. Entrance to the four state universities is determined by examination. Ethnic minorities have the right to education in their language: Albanians, Hungarians, Ruthenians, Slovaks, Romanians, and Turks have schools through high school. The one Albanian-language university has been closed due to secessionist activity.

Health. There is an extensive national health system. Private practice was legalized in 1990, but most people cannot afford it. Public hospitals suffer supply and equipment shortages, and health standards are deteriorating.† Food shortages prior to 1996 caused some nutritional deficiencies in children.

FOR THE TRAVELER

The U.S. Department of State warns against travel to the regions of Serbia and Kosovo in Serbia-Montenegro. U.S. citizens could be singled out in sporadic acts of violence. Embassy operations have been suspended and no consular services are available. Popular tourist spots include Novi Sad and Belgrade, especially Skadarlija Street and the Fort of Kalemegdan (where the Danube and Sava Rivers intersect). Orthodox monasteries featuring religious art are in Sopoćani, Gračanica, Peć, and Mileševa. Montenegro's old mountain town of Cetinje is worth a visit, as is its remarkably beautiful coast. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia closed its U.S. embassy in 1999 but does retain a permanent mission to the United Nations at 854 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10021; phone (212) 879-8700.